

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0366

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF

SUBJECT: RABIN VISIT: ISRAELI POLICY ON SETTLEMENTS IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

1. TWO DECISIONS IN EARLY DECEMBER ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES INVOLVED PRIMIN RABIN PERSONALLY IN THIS INHERENTLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE. FIRST, IN RE-ACTION TO NOVEMBER 30 UN SECURITY COUNCIL DECISION, RABIN GAVE GREEN LIGHT TO APPROVAL OF FOUR NEW SETTLEMENTS ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. SHORTLY THEREAFTER HE ACCEDED TO COMPROMISE ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY GROUP OF GUSH EMUNIM ACTIVITISTS WHO HAD ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT IN SEBASTIA ON WEST BANK WOULD BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN "NON-PERMANENT" ENCAMPMENT NEARBY.

2. BOTH OF THESE DECISIONS WILL REQUIRE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS. IN CASE OF GOLAN HEIGHTS SETTLEMENTS THERE REMAIN QUESTIONS OF SCOPE AND PACE OF CONSTRUCTION. RE SEBASTIA SETTLERS, DECISION MUST BE MADE WHETHER THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN; AVOIDANCE OF SUCH DECISION WILL BE TANTAMOUNT TO ALLOWING THEM TO REMAIN. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT GOVERNMENT IS WORKING ON PLAN FOR SIGNIFICANTLY ENLARGED MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES FOR JERUSALEM WITH SURROUNDING JEWISH SETTLEMENTS; THIS ALSO MAY IN NEAR FUTURE BECOME PUBLIC MATTER REQUIRING RABIN TO TAKE POSITION.

3. HAVING GIVE GO-AHREAD FOR ADDITIONAL GOLAN SETTLE-
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MENTS, RABIN WILL BE HARD-PRESSED BOTH BY ELEMENTS OF

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) AND BY THOSE LABOR ALIGNMENT ELEMENTS REPRESENTING KIBBUTZ AND MOSHAV ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP THEM WITH MAXIMUM SPEED.

4. RE SEBASTIA SETTLERS, ANY ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THEM FROM THEIR PRESENT ENCAMPMENT (AT QADDUM) COULD WELL PROVOKE VIOLENT RESISTANCE, WITH SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT OF MUCH OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. BASED ON INITIAL REACTION OF MODERATE ELEMENTS TO COMPROMISE DECISION, MOREOVER, IT IS PROBABLE THAT QUESTION OF PERMANENCY OF QADDUM CAMP WILL REAPPEAR FREQUENTLY IN PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AND WILL REQUIRE SOME DECISION, IF ONLY TO DO NOTHING.

5. SEVERAL SOURCES TELL US THAT ADVOCATES OF ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY, ENCOURAGED BY DECISIONS OF EARLY DECEMBER, PLAN TO MOUNT MAJOR EFFORT TO ESTABLISH MORE SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES SHORTLY AFTER RABIN RETURNS FROM WASHINGTON. GIVEN CURRENT CONSTELLATION OF FORCES ON SETTLEMENT ISSUE, PRIME MINISTER MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RESIST SUCH PRESSURES.

6. COMMENT: WE SHOULD FIRMLY RESTATE OUR POSITION ON SETTLEMENTS TO RABIN IN WASHINGTON--I.E. 1) THAT PRESENCE OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES SERIOUSLY COMPLICATES FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS; 2) THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN SUPPORT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS; AND 3) THAT WE WILL STAKE OUR CASE PUBLICLY, IF NECESSARY.
TOON

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